



MEDREGION UPDATE

Regional Office Tunis

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A MEPI Local Grant Supports Rural Moroccan Youth Launch their Own Projects 1

Grants \$ At Work: Grants and Social Media 2

Welcome to New MEPI Staff 2

A MEPI Project Produces a Documentary Movie to Promote Religious Tolerance Among Lebanese Youth 3

New Funding Opportunity 3

MEPI Alumni-West Bank and Gaza Tackling social Issues Through Film Making 4

MEPI Medregion Update Newsletter is produced by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Regional Office at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia.

Editor-in-Chief:
Jed Taro Dornburg
Editor:
Khaoula Touati

A MEPI Local Grant Supports Rural Moroccan Youth Launch their Own Projects



*A training session for rural girls:
Identifying medicinal and aromatic plants*

Developing young people's self-confidence, dependability, resourcefulness, and vocational skills will prompt the emergence of a generation of leaders working for the greater good. To this end, the MEPI Local Grant project awarded to Association du Nord Pour le Développement Educatif et Economique (ANDEE) in Morocco provided at-risk young rural Moroccans from Chefchaouen with employable skills to help them be an integral and constructive part of the social and economic development of their communities.

The "Agriculture Training for Rural Moroccan Youth" (FAJR) project, gave young unemployed men and women, who dropped out from secondary schools, a second chance to go back to class and develop applicable and marketable agricultural skills that have the potential to change their lives as we shall see.

Moroccan Youth acquire Agricultural skills:

ANDEE conducted a series of field visits to fields in the villages. With the guidance of an

expert, participants learned how to identify aromatic and medicinal plants that could be planted in the villages, how to prepare the land for planting, lining, irrigation, and the plant domestication processes.

The project helped me learn about how to plant the aromatic and medicinal plants, what are their uses and I have also learned how to create a cooperative. FAJR project taught me to become self-confident.

Fatima Hayoun, 29 from Tifraouen.

In addition to agricultural training, FAJR provided participants with training on life-skills, including how to identify personal goals and how to develop short and long term plans. These sessions were followed by a training on how to create a cooperative and run micro-projects. Participants were eager to learn about the process of establishing their own income generating projects. They expressed a great enthusiasm and interest in applying the skills they acquired and exploring new opportunities in their villages. ANDEE



conducted a series of meetings in Chefchaouen that were designed to introduce participants to the government programs that are in place to serve the economic and social development of youth.

Participants were also exposed to banks' programs that promote agricultural activities and provide suitable loans for farmers.

FAJR supports micro-projects: cooperatives

The project supported participants to establish six micro-projects; four of them were in the form of building hen-houses and two plants reservoirs.

Other groups of participants established a total of four cooperatives:

- The Cooperative Tazya for honey production;
- The Cooperative of Zaytouna for cattle raising and selling;
- The Cooperative of Tefraouen for medicinal and aromatic plants (collecting, processing and selling plants,
- The Fruitful Agricultural Cooperative.

Participants indicated that the creation of the micro projects and cooperatives has had a significant impact and has been a turning point in their lives. ■



Grants and Social Media



Social Media connects people all over the world. Over the last years, we witnessed social media change the way people relate and open new horizons. You can also use social media to help your organizations develop a broader network of participants and advance your organization's goals. Not only will more people become informed about your organization and your projects, but also you will be able to target more people to participate in those projects, and exchange ideas with creative minds from all over the world.

Many of our MEPI alumni have used new media for their advocacy campaigns. For instance, after attending MEPI workshops, Dina Najem has effectively used social media tools to advocate for freedom of speech and protected the rights of women in Iraq. In addition to Tweets and Facebook status updates, Dina uses her blog, [Iraqi Streets 4 Change](#), to

broadcast demonstrations for reform in Iraq. To see MEPI alumni activism, [Go Youth's](#) Facebook page and other social media tools mobilize young Palestinians to participate in conferences, sporting events, and access other opportunities around the globe by connecting them with interested youth and updating their pages frequently.

MEPI expects all of our implementers to maintain social media sites to spread the word about your projects. We also recommend you link to MEPI's social media pages, so that your followers can learn more about us, and both MEPI and implementers can stay connected.

Below we've provided descriptions of some helpful new media tools for advocacy and activism:

Status Updates and Tweets allow #MEPI, partners, and interested public to find out the latest news and developments in your

organization. By using tags and key terms in your updates, such as the country where you work or the or participants' names, interested parties can search that term and stumble upon your organization's page, learning about all the great things you've accomplished and expanding your network. Keeping #MEPI informed through Facebook status updates will help us monitor whether your project has reached all its planned milestones as well.

Webpage Links to articles, discussion forums, and partner websites will help promote your organization and your partners. Links, you post, allow followers to find information about your group in various places around the internet, and promote content produced by beneficiaries of your projects to a wide audience.

Uploading Photos and Videos will allow readers to experience your project.

Comment threads on these videos give you the opportunity to see the reactions of your participants as well as the general public. Tagging people in these posts connects your participants and followers, and builds an online network of people around your organization.

Maintaining Blogs about your experience with a project, or asking your participants to keep blogs will really help give a personal account of your project's impact and success. You should describe what you did during the project, the result, participants' feedback, lessons learned, etc. Link your blog posts to your other social media pages in order to notify followers of updates.

For more information about MEPI, please visit the MEPI Medregion [website](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) channel and [Twitter](#). ■

MEPI Medregion Office News

MEPI Regional Office in Tunis is very pleased to welcome two new colleagues to the team: Keith Krause joins us as our new Program Officer and Basma Belhadj as the new Program Assistant. Their biographic information is below. We wish them both a warm welcome to MEPI!

Keith Krause has been with the Department of State since January of 2009 and served



Keith Krause

for two years as a Consular Officer in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service with

Welcome to New MEPI Staff

a concentration in International Politics and a certificate in Islam and Muslim-Christian Understanding. Keith also completed a semester of studies at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. He speaks Spanish, French and Arabic.

Basma Belhadj joins MEPI from the Arabic Field School (FSI), where she was a Language Instructor for eight years.



Basma Belhadj

Basma holds a Master degree in Linguistics, Arabic Department of High Institute of Languages Tunis.

In her free time Basma volunteers in civil society activities. ■

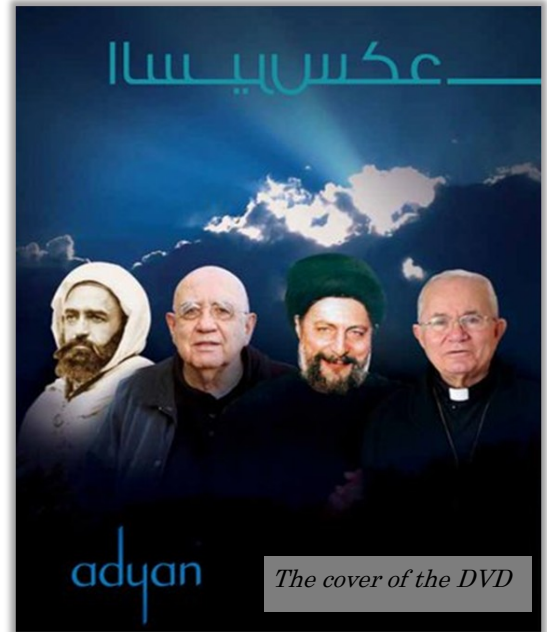
A MEPI Project Produces a Documentary to Promote Religious Tolerance Among Lebanese Youth

Aaks El Seir (*Against the Current*), a documentary movie that highlights the power of faith facing discrimination, intolerance and extremism, has become a material of discussion in different academic and university courses. Aaks el Seir has also received extensive media coverage in Lebanon.

The Aaks El Seir documentary was produced as part of the MEPI-local grant project "Toward a comprehensive Memory" being implemented by the

groups during the times of crisis and confessional conflicts. Among these personalities: Prince Abdl Kader Al Jaziri, Bishop Salim Ghazal, Imam Moussa Al Sadr and Reverend Makram Kozah.

ADYAN toured several schools targeting Catholic, Muslim and Druze communities. ADYAN reported that 4010 people attended the screenings of the movie across Lebanon.



stated that "Fanaticism is a problem in our society. Young people from different religious backgrounds live separately from each other, which fosters stereotypes and mutual discrimination among the young generation."

To empower the movie message and to facilitate discussions about it, ADYAN prepared a pedagogical guide for the movie. The guide consists of an introduction to the historical context of the film and its objectives, a brief summary of the personalities, guidelines for the discussion and their relative answers, and additional themes that could be developed through the movie.

This pedagogical guide was distributed to directors and pedagogical leaders of 160 secondary schools and NGOs in Lebanon. ■



Schools intercultural meeting: Islamic Makassed School and Notre Dame de Jamhour catholic school, April 14th.

Lebanese Foundation for Interfaith studies and Spiritual Solidarity (ADYAN). The movie sheds light on highly respected personalities within their religious communities, stressing the role they play to ensure communication and solidarity with other

The events were attended by students, teachers, and religious leaders. The audience expressed their appreciation to the movie message. Talking about the success of the movie and its impact on Lebanese youth, Mr. Tony Sawma, Director of ADYAN Media Production,

New Funding Opportunities

NEW! Calling all organizations interested in funding from the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), including MEPI. Read this [PDF instruction booklet](#) then take the questionnaire to see if your organization is a good fit for future NEA funding in the areas of political and economic development, democracy, human rights, freedom of expression, and much more! NEA will notify you if your organization might be considered for future funding through this opportunity. Don't wait to tell us about your work... This opportunity closes on **SEPTEMBER 30, 2011**.

The launch of the Maghreb Fast Growth 50 (Maghreb 50) competition.

AllWorld Network with Harvard Business School Professor Michael Porter and in partnership with ISED Solutions is leading this pioneering first-of-its-kind effort to identify the fastest growing private companies in North Africa, which will be unveiled in October, 2011. The top ten Maghreb 50 enterprises will be featured at an awards ceremony in North Africa, and invited to the Arabia 500 Awards and Global Summit in Jordan on November 16-17, 2011, and subsequently to the April 2012 AllWorld Summit at Harvard University.

Champion companies from Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia from any economic sector are invited to apply at www.AllWorldLive.com.

Application deadline is August 31, 2011.

Spotlight on MEPI Alumni

MEPI Alumni-West Bank and Gaza Tackling Social Issues Through Filmmaking



MEPI Alumni received certificates of completion



MEPI Alumni during the training course

As part of networking with MEPI Alumni, MEPI grantee The Palestine Movie & Video Directors Association (PMVDA) conducted a multimedia course for seven MEPI Alumni from three different visitors programs: Student Leaders, A-PLUS, and MEET.

The course covered the following topics: script writing and storyboarding, visual language, theory of directing, video editing and photography.

The course equipped participating students with skills and techniques to help them document their MEPI activities, as well as produce documentaries focusing on problems in their societies, and raise awareness on important issues.

On July 5, 2011, MEPI Alumni students, who participated in a multimedia training course, received certificates for successfully completing the course. In the



closing event students voted on several topics for possible adaptation to short films, choosing two: Child Labor and Youth; and Political Parties.

They will now work in collaboration with PMVDA to produce three-minute video clips, that are meant to raise awareness in Palestinian society. The students were thrilled to participate in the program and expressed gratitude to the Alumni network for giving them this opportunity. ■



Middle East Partnership Initiative

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, is a unique program designed to engage directly with and invest in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. MEPI partners with local, regional and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments.

MEPI Regional Office, Tunis

Housed in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, the MEPI Regional Office Tunis administers MEPI local projects in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and West Bank/Gaza and accounts for more than \$5 million in program funding in 2010. In addition to coordinating with U.S. Embassies throughout the region, Tunis RO provides a variety of funding opportunities (such as the MEPI Local Grants program and Civil Society Grants) as well as supporting visits, seminars and training programs to advance the formation of communities for tomorrow.

Stay Connected With MEPI

Website: medregion.mepi.state.gov
E-mail: mepi-medregion@state.gov
Phone: +216 71 107 055
Fax: +216 71 107 436

MEPI Regional Office Tunis
 U.S. Embassy
 Les Berges du Lac— 1053
 Tunis, Tunisia



Follow us @MEPI Medregion



<https://www.facebook.com/USMEPI>



www.YouTube.com/user/MEPIROTTunis

To subscribe or unsubscribe please send us an e-mail at: Mepi.medregion@state.gov